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AN ADDRESS  
—TO THE—  
ELECTORS OF LISGAR,

DELIVERED AT SELKIRK,

AUG. 18, 1887,

*By GOLDWIN SMITH.*

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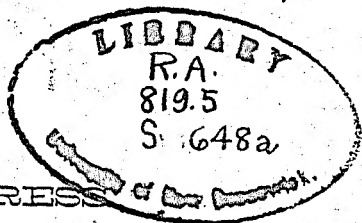
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AN ADDRESS

—TO THE—

## ELECTORS OF LISGAR,

• *Delivered at Selkirk, Aug. 18th, 1887,*

BY GOLDWIN SMITH.

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It was with great pleasure that I accepted an invitation to visit Selkirk. The trip is pleasant and the name is historic. This, I know, was not the actual scene of the drama connected with Lord Selkirk's famous enterprise, but it is the centre of the district in which the drama was enacted. Everything is to me full of interest that speaks of the early settler. In these days the railway brings all the instruments and appliances of a scientific civilization into the heart of the virgin wilderness. But the pioneer fought a real and stern battle with nature. Strong must have been his heart as well as his arm. Strong too must have been the affection of the wife who was the partner of his toils and perils. Rugged perhaps, but genuine and full even of true poetry must have been the idyll of his life. With him lies buried a history, which if we could recover it would be seen to be worthier of record and more inspiring than the events of political strife, strife as barren for the most part as the struggles of the early settler were fruitful. I have looked on tombs richly carved and famous in story with less emotion than I have felt in looking on the lonely and lowly grave of the pioneer.

Lord Selkirk's career was not stainless, nor was his enterprise altogether prosperous or his own end happy. But he was at all events a genuine colonizer and a practical aspirant to leadership in the New World. He did not come only for the purpose of land-grabbing and speculation. If any British nobleman or gentleman is disposed to follow Selkirk's example, and to bring whatever of genuine value and real influence for good may be left in ancient nobility to political and social leadership here, we shall do well to make him welcome.

It was, however, not only for the sake of a pleasant trip or because the name had a historic charm that I was glad to come to Selkirk. There were, as you know, some of your electors who wished me at the last election to run for this county, and took measures to bring my name before you. I am glad on that account to meet you and let you see that the man whom my friends commended to your suffrages, had at all events, a real existence, and was not an impostor or a tramp. Before, however, explaining to you what happened, let me put you, as well as myself, at ease by saying at once that as I have not been, so it is certain that I never shall be, a candidate for your suffrages. You need not therefore feel any suspicion that in speaking to you of the past I am fishing for support in the future. I neither desired the nomination nor took any step whatever to procure it. Three years ago I came here without a political object of any kind, to see the North-West, and at the same time, as I had been rather run down by heat and work, to refresh myself with a breath of your pure and life giving air. At that time the people were greatly disappointed by the conduct of almost all their representatives at Ottawa, whom they accused of misrepresenting and even of betraying them. There could be no doubt as to the prevalence of the feeling, which was expressed to me even by strangers with whom I fell into conversation at the hotel ; and

it seemed to me, so far as I understood the case, that the popular excitement was not only strong but just. Under these circumstances persons whom I had every reason to regard as competent and patriotic representatives of the interests of the Province, told me that they should like to see me a candidate for a constituency in Manitoba, and that they believed that a nomination might be obtained. They said that the Province stood absolutely in need of independent representatives entirely above the reach of temptation or influence of any kind, and that they believed that I should fill the bill. I have never had any taste for parliamentary life; I several times declined advantageous overtures of that kind in England where I had everything in my favour. I was past the age of ambition or desire of office, and I had not the slightest wish to exchange my pleasant home, my social circle, and my literary pursuits for the faction fights and the hotels of Ottawa. But I felt that this was a special case; that if I could do anything to serve this young community and to remove obstacles to its prosperity, if I could write my name even on the lowest line of the fair opening scroll of Manitoban History, it would be a pleasant thought for the arm-chair of old age. As a public writer I had taken special interest in North Western questions, and had constantly advocated the cause of self-government and protested against monopoly and disallowance. I had also advocated with special reference to North Western interests, the removal of the customs line. As a member of the Law Amendment Society of Toronto, I had borne my part in the extension of the Torrens System of land conveyance to this country. I therefore did not decline at once, but said that when the time came I would, if I was asked, consider the invitation; in the meantime, however, I earnestly advised my friends to look out for a local and a younger candidate, and I repeated this advice to the last, coupling with it the

heartly promise of any assistance which my means would enable me to afford. I am sure those who corresponded with me will do me the justice to say that I never strove to grasp the nomination. I was not a local man, but Toronto is as near Lisgar as British Columbia; and if the choice of the people were to be absolutely limited to local men, the calibre of Parliament would be terribly reduced. The Dominion Parliament is not a conference of local delegates, it is the council of the whole nation. I could always have been among you in the summer, and I could, at any time, have gone to England if your concerns had required it. I felt in my heart that I should be true and faithful to you, and fidelity just now is a pearl of no mean price. I should have had against me both the regular parties; for those who call themselves Liberals, preferred, as devotees of party, Toryism to Independence, as well as the influence of the C. P. R., which I have no doubt, for very good reasons, thought that Mr. Ross was its man. However, I have fought a hard fight before now and no petty or sordid object of personal cupidity or ambition, but Manitoban independence would have been the prize. But the election came on in mid-winter; I had, not long before, been laid up for some months by a dangerous attack of inflammation of the lungs, and my medical adviser put his veto upon my undertaking the campaign. I could only telegraph once more the offer of my best assistance for any independent candidate who might come forward in my place.

It was alleged that I had started the *Sun* for the purpose of booming myself as a candidate. I was brought up at an old English public school, where if we had not the latest improvements in education we were at least taught not to play dirty tricks. I gave a little help in starting the *Sun*. I have helped in starting other Independent papers without such good financial results. I do not think I can possibly make a

better use of my means than in helping to set the press free from thralldom to party, and enabling it to be the honest champion and faithful guide of the people. In no instance, I declare upon my honor, have I interfered in any way with the policy of the paper, or sought to use the paper directly or indirectly for any object of my own. I never even hinted to the editor of the *Sun* a wish that he should bring forward my name. He did it of his own accord, while I was in England, whither I had gone at a moment when the election was supposed to be impending, another proof that I was not ravenously eager for the nomination. Support of an Independent candidate was of course his line, as support of the party candidates was the line of a party journal. He could hardly have done otherwise than he did, even had I not happened to hold a small amount of stock in his paper. At all events, I again say on my honor, that he was in no way prompted or influenced by me. Whatever was done by him or through his paper was done spontaneously either by him or by my friends.

There is nothing in this, I venture to think, that could justify or excuse the insults with which I was assailed and with which I continued to be assailed even when all was over, by the party press, and especially by the organs of Mr. Norquay's government and of Sir John Macdonald, if they are not rather those of the C. P. R. than of either. I need not discuss the general policy of Sir John Macdonald's government, which I should not have gone specially to oppose, for I should have been ready to give fair play to any government which would deal fairly with my constituents. The monuments of Sir John Macdonald's long rule, as it seems to me, are likely to be, a vast debt, a country every day becoming dearer to live in, and a million of Canadians on the other side of the line. But few except his partisans will deny that his system has fatally lowered the tone of public life in all its departments,

that of journalism among the rest. He has had to submit to being blackmailed by his own agents in the press ; and the paper set up some years ago under his personal auspices at Toronto, with an announcement that it was to be a journal for gentlemen, turned out to be a journal the foul and ruffianly personalities of which no decent mechanic could have read without disgust. I venture, as a retired journalist, to hint both to Mr. Norquay and to Sir John Macdonald a doubt whether the "ribstabber" is ever worthy of his hire. One thing I was glad to see : among all the injurious epithets which were flung on me, neither of my assailants ventured to say that I was not an honest man, that I would ever let myself be bought or turned aside by corrupt influence from the path of honor and duty, that I would be otherwise than true to those who had trusted me, or that I should ever have occasion when the session was over to shun a meeting with them, and to slink, like one conscious of having betrayed them, to my distant home.

I suppose it will now be generally admitted that my friends were right at all events in desiring to bring forward an Independent candidate. Party candidates will give you pledges on the subject of Disallowance or on any subject you like, but they make the pledge subject to the interests of the party. Your Tory member, for example, having sworn to be true to your local interest on the Disallowance question, goes to Ottawa and the first thing he does perhaps, is to dine with the Prime Minister and arrange with him how his faith to his constituents may be punctually kept without any inconvenience to the government. If the Prime Minister is an old parliamentary hand, he is sure to be ready with solutions of moral problems; he knows how to satisfy the perplexed conscience by giving a dispensation for ostensible opposition, which he at the same time takes care to deprive of its sting. The Reform member would do the same if his party were in



power, and as it is he will consult his party leader before his constituency. For thoroughgoing and resolute devotion to the interests of the constituency in a matter such as Disallowance, there is no security but perfect independence of party, as well as of bonds and temptations of every other kind, that by the independence even of a single man, much may be done, appears from the effect produced by the protest of Mr. Patterson against the infamy of his party the other day.

A curious thing is party. When I was in Ireland many years ago the government had to stop an annual faction fight between the Three-year olds and the Two-year olds. The origin of the factions was lost in the mist of time, but it was supposed to be a dispute about the age of a bull. There were two other factions which used to fight every year for the possession of a stone, to which some legendary interest attached. The magistrates, to prevent the faction fight, took the stone and sank it in the river, but the factions combined to fish it up again and then fought for it as before. In Italy, Guelphs and Ghibelins, Blacks and Whites, tore each other to pieces for the name long after it had ceased to have any trace of meaning. In Holland, the *Cods* and the *Hooks* did the same. The most deadly affrays used in the time of the Roman Empire to take place at Constantinople, between the Blues and Greens, whose party principles were the colors of two sets of jockeys in a chariot race. I fancy this last instance gives us the key to the real nature of party and to the extraordinary and ridiculous hold that it seems to have upon mankind. It gratifies the fighting instinct and the sporting instinct, both of which perhaps are survivals of the savage state lingering on like some other survivals in spite of our public schools and all our general civilization. There are some who hold that Toryism and Gritism are congenital and that every man must keep through life the party characters which he brings into the world;

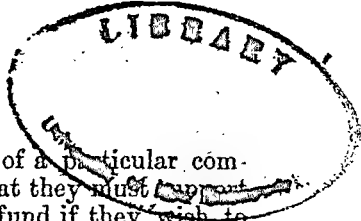
but the ease with which a politician changes his party when there is anything to be gained by the change, seems to show that this theory is unsound, and to relieve the Creator of the responsibility which if it were sound would be cast upon him. In England, from whose history the idea of party government is taken, the parties had for a long time a real meaning. The Tories were the adherents of the Stuarts and of Government by prerogative, the Whigs were the adherents of the house of Hanover and liberty. Even when the original quarrel had been buried in the grave of the House of Stuart, a real dividing line still severed the party of reaction, aristocracy and the Established Church from that of progress, democracy and religious equality; nor are those vital issues yet exhausted. So long as organic questions are before the community, a citizen may act morally and rationally in submitting his individual opinion and conscience on minor questions to party leadership and discipline for the purpose of attaining to great and permanent objects. But when there is no longer any organic question before the community, are the citizens to be divided into two political sections, as it were two teams in a political cricket match? Are they to be always flying at each other's throats, instead of taking counsel together for the common good, in order to keep up the party system? With the increase of intellectual activity and the improvement of public morality, party discipline is everywhere breaking up. Men will submit to the bondage no longer; they assert their right of thinking for themselves instead of having the party Whip to think for them. The consequence is that in all the Parliaments sectionalism is setting in and it has become hardly possible to hold together a party large enough to furnish the basis of a party government. In France the sections are so numerous and discordant that a government can hardly stand for six months, and the country is always on the brink of

administrative anarchy. In Italy and Spain much the same state of things is seen. In the German Parliament there are at least nine sections, and Parliamentary anarchy would at once break out, if it were not repressed by the strong hand of Bismarck, who governs by personal force with little regard to the party system. In the United States the Republican party is split into Stalwarts and Mugwumps, and the split seems likely to be permanent. In England herself, the mother of the system, we see the same tendency to dissolution; instead of two, there are now four or five parties in the House of Commons, not one of them strong enough by itself to sustain a ministry, and the consequence is that not only is government becoming utterly unstable, but the nation with all its power and greatness, and after all its centuries of heroic effort is now almost laid, by the mean ambitions and the ignominious weakness of its legislators, at the feet of a foreign conspiracy which openly seeks its destruction. Never in political history has there been a sadder or a more disgraceful spectacle. When parties have been broken up into sections a state of things ensues in which not the majority but the minority, and even a small minority sometimes governs by throwing its weight into one scale or the other. In this Province it seems a minority which commands only five votes in the Legislature controls the Government in this way.

In Canada as in England the parties had originally a meaning, and a real ground of existence. One was the party of Royal, the other that of popular, or as it was called, responsible government. But when that issue had been settled, and some others which were dependent on it, such as the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, had been settled also, the meaning of the parties and the ground for their existence ceased. The two camps now barely retain the faintest smell of the wine of principle with which severally they were once filled. A Conservative cannot now tell you what

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he wants to conserve, or a Reformer what he wants to reform. Both the parties want to be in, and keep or to turn the other party out; each accuses the other with too much truth of unlimited trickery and corruption; both collect around them a swarm of evil agencies, including that of partisan journalism, by which their sinister machinery is worked; while they poison with mutual calumny the breath of the community, degrade the calling of the statesman, and vitiate the political sentiments of the people. Not only have they lost their original principles of existence; they are like two fencers who have changed foils in the scuffle. The Tories pass Radical Franchise Acts, while the Liberals are found attempting to storm the citadel of office by an alliance with the Ultramontanes of Quebec. The Tory party has been able to hold power during a long series of years, and thus to give an air of stability to the government. The reason is that it is the party not of a principle or cause, but of a man who has managed with wonderful address, perfected by long experience, to hold together by personal influences and bribes of various kinds, a motley combination of all sorts of interests, Provincial, municipal, ecclesiastical and commercial, as well as of all sorts of men, irrespective of opinion, or of the variations of opinion on any question of principle. The means which have been used in order to do this have profoundly debauched the political character of a people which by its moral soundness, its piety, its industry, its frugality, and all its natural qualities were as well fitted to form the basis of a pure and upright government as any community in the world. Callousness to political immorality is creeping over the soul of the nation. The Pacific Railway Scandal did, by its flagrancy, arouse popular indignation for the moment, but cases of corruption not less significant are daily coming to light without causing more than a ripple of emotion; and when a Prime Minister, on the eve of an election,



calls together the representatives of a particular commercial interest and tells them that they must support him and subscribe to his election fund if they wish to have the commercial policy of the country regulated in their favor, nobody seems to be at all shocked, not even the Manitoba farmer who, as the greatest sufferer by the protective tariff, is thus paying the most oppressive tribute to corruption. I ask, what carried the Digby election in Nova Scotia for the government, and the answer is, four grants of public money to local objects and the promise of a fifth. Besides the demoralization the system has involved a lavish outlay of money in Better Terms and public expenditure of all kind for electioneering purposes which, by entailing an accumulation of debt may possibly be the death of the system itself and that at no distant period. "After me the Deluge," said Metternich, but before Metternich died the Deluge came. By Mr. Blake's retirement the history of the regular parliamentary opposition, which he has eloquently led, may have closed for the time, only to make way for a broad popular movement against government by Better Terms and corruption, commercial monopoly and railway restriction. The Grit party was for some time in the same manner the party not of a principle or of a cause but of a man, and you were liable to being hunted down, not only politically but socially, by men who called themselves Liberals if you would not owe blind allegiance to the political dictatorship of Mr. Brown. Since the death of Mr. Brown Gritism has been looking out first on one side then on the other for a basis of principle and has found nothing but a series of strategical expedients, the last and most fatal of which was the Rielite intrigue. It is now a hopeless wreck. Few things could be more disappointing than the success of the party wire-pullers in setting up their machines and introducing their names and watchwords here. It might have been supposed that this expanse was too ample, this air too

free, this community too full of the fresh vigor of youth to prevent the introduction of anything narrow, antiquated and slavish. If partyism is senseless in Old Lands it is doubly senseless here, since the parties were formed long before these Provinces existed, and without the slightest reference to their interests or to any question in which they can be concerned. But the solution is probably to be found, as I said before, in the old history of the *Blues* and *Greens*.

Now as to this question of Disallowance, which is agitating and which well may agitate the Province. For my part I should be disposed to settle it in a very summary way, by saying that all restraints upon the freedom of railway development, especially in a young agricultural country, are iniquity as well as folly. To prevent the people from sending their produce in the cheapest way to the best market is to take the hard-earned bread out of their mouths, and only a corrupt and servile legislature would do the bidding of a minister in giving effect to such a policy. You might as well spoil the seed or cripple the plough. What! Ask people to come and settle here, to struggle with all the difficulties and hardships of the pioneer, and then load their industry with a double chain, taxing their imports, their farm implements, their lumber, their clothes, their canned meats, the fruit which is to them the greatest of luxuries, and at the same time blighting their fields with railway monopoly. If the people were in their wrath, not only to build a railway for themselves in defiance of the Prime Minister's edict, but to set his tariff at defiance also, though great would be the illegality, the crime would not be so great. National policy! Is not the industry of the farmers of Manitoba national as well as that of the protected manufacturers of Ontario? But we hope that no resort to anything like illegality or violence will be needed. Your government, it appears, have made up their minds to adopt a suggestion which, from what-

ever quarter it must come, is theirs when they adopt it, and which may bring you peace with justice. The strict legality of the veto is indisputable, but under those principles of the British constitution which the British North America Act recognizes, the exercise of the legal power is bounded by constitutional right. So much Sir John Macdonald himself has distinctly admitted, though he has not shown a very firm grasp of of his own principle. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, as a strictly legal tribunal, could not go behind the legality of the veto to the question of constitutional rights. But a mixed committee of lawyers and statesmen might; and before a committee of that kind I have myself gone with the case of the Oxford University Commission. Your case would rest, first, on the broad principle of non-interference with provincial legislation in its proper domain. In the second place you would show that Manitoba, in reference to this particular matter, had a specific legal claim to exemption. In the third place you would cite the pledges given by ministers personally or through ministerial candidates before the election, that the policy of disallowance should be laid aside. If pressed, you might go further and show that the veto nominally exercised by an impartial Governor-General, is really exercised by partisan ministers, whose political fortunes are bound up with the interests of the C. P. R., and who are not entirely free even from the bias of personal connection in the matter. For my part I cannot help thinking that the Governor-General might constitutionally have exercised his own discretion in this matter, while I am sure that it would have been well, both for the Dominion and for the Province, if he had done so. But he seems to deem it his duty to be entirely passive in the hands of his ministers, and to do and say simply by what they order him. He has resigned the prerogative of dissolution among other things absolutely into their keeping, and allows an unscrupu-

lous minister to perpetuate his power, in defiance of the constitution and of popular right by dissolving parliament when there is no constitutional crisis requiring an appeal to the country, merely for the purpose of jockeying his opponents. If the Governor-General's office is a pageant, it is a costly pageant. It is worse than costly; it is a decorous cover for usurpation and abuse, which if they were not disguised in the robes of royal prerogative, but stood forth in their naked repulsiveness, would not be tolerated by the people.

All this is part of the notion against which I for one as a public writer have constantly protested, that these North Western Provinces stand in point of constitutional right on a lower footing than their sisters in the confederation, that they are a sort of outlying property with which the Dominion is at liberty to deal as it thinks fit, and that their inhabitants are in a condition of half dependency, not of perfectly equal partnership in Canadian rights and liberties. Freemen and men of the pioneer stamp and spirit will hardly be induced to settle here on such terms. The Dominion, we are told, bought the North-West with its own money. It paid a sum bearing no proportion to the value of the territory to extinguish the indefinite and precarious claim of the Hudson's Bay Company. But did not the United States buy Louisiana? And are the people of Louisiana on that account treated differently from those of the other States? In making over the territory, a British Parliament could never intend to sell any part of the right and liberties of the people. It never could intend that the land when peopled should be anything but the home of British freedom. It could never have looked forward to seeing the capital of Manitoba threatened with ruin if the Province dared to struggle against the the yoke of railway monopoly imposed upon it by the will of the Ottawa government.



Early frosts are cruel, but more cruel to this country, and worse obstacles to its progress, if I mistake not, have been railway monopoly and Ottawa government. I have not a word to say against the builders of the C.P.R. They did their work with energy, and they did it well; they gallantly staked their all upon the success of their enterprise, and we cannot grudge them what they have won. For the policy of the government which laid out the line they are in no way responsible, nor will they be responsible for anything done by the Government so long as they refrain from political interference. But the line was not laid out in the interest of the people of this Province. It has scattered the settlements along a tract of 800 miles, when they had much better have been gathered closely together here in Manitoba round the centre of distribution, and with all the advantages of neighborhood. It has thus made freights, both of imports and of exports, high. It is a political and military, not a commercial line, and to make it pay, government is now struggling to prevent the building of commercial roads, and to keep up what to a grain-producing country must be the most deadly of all monopolies. If a political and military railroad is required for national or imperial purposes, let the nation or the empire pay for it; let not the burden and the sacrifice be thrown on a particular province. What will Manitoba gain by the passage of troops or torpedoes for a Russian war? What will she gain even by the transit of tea across the continent? This system of political railroads as well as that of prohibitive tariffs is part of a desperate attempt to put asunder economically what nature has joined together and to join together what nature has put asunder.

The government at Ottawa is a distant government, and a party government, and in both those respects it has been a bad government for the people of the North-West. As a distant government, it has

and misunderstood or neglected their interests. As a party government, in the exercise of its patronage it has been forced to sacrifice their interests to the claims of its partisans. Unfortunately, owing perhaps in part to the evil exigencies of its task, which is that of holding together a number of Provinces geographically scattered and united by no actual bond, it is not only distant and partisan, but to a lamentable extent corrupt, and the North-West perhaps more than any other part of the Dominion, has suffered by its corruption. Far better would it have been for the people here had Manitoba not been a member of the Confederation, but an independent British colony under an upright and honorable governor appointed by the Crown, free from party influence and bound to regard no interest but of the Province under his care. You would never have had the Half-breed rebellion, of which the more I hear the more I am convinced that the blame rests on the failure of a distant and partisan Government to make itself acquainted with the situation, to appoint proper agents and to do its own duty. But it would be difficult to say what Confederation has done for any of us, and what the Ottawa Government gives us in return for the vast and ever-growing expenditure, which, while the financial condition since the civil war of the United States has been constantly improving, threatens to bring Canada to financial disaster. External protection with internal peace and freedom of intercourse, which are the main object of Confederation, the provinces already had in their union under the flag of the British Government. Military force Confederation can hardly be said to have given us since it takes our utmost efforts and more than eight millions of money to suppress a rebellion which puts about five hundred ill-armed men into the field. Nationality it certainly has not given us, for there are hardly two communities on earth which less form or are less likely to form one nation

than the British and French provinces of the Dominion. The separate nationality of the French province is becoming more intense, jealous and aggressive every day.

The crisis on which you are now entering is likely in its issue to be decisive of your fortunes, and the struggle ought to call forth your utmost energy and resolution. This country has wonderful advantages, but it has also its drawbacks. It cannot afford to be heavily handicapped in the race. It could not, even if it stood by itself without a competitor, sustain the double incubus of railway monopoly and an adverse tariff, still less can it bear such a burden when it has to compete for emigration and in the produce market with the United States. The natural tendency of the emigrant from old Canada, who is after all your best settler, would be to join the Canadians who have settled here, but railway monopoly and an adverse tariff are enough to drive him away from Manitoba to Minnesota and Dakota. You will have a hard battle to fight among other reasons for this, that the bias of the politicians at Ottawa is always against anything which leads to more intimate relations with the people of the United States, because they scent danger to the closeness of their political pasture. Looking round anxiously to see what the spirit of your people is and how they are likely to bear themselves in the conflict, one cannot help being painfully impressed by the fact that some of them at least cherish suspicions as to the loyalty and constancy of their leaders. Members of the Provincial Government are accused of being half-hearted, of beating time when they pretend to be advancing and even of intending secretly to betray the cause of which they are ostensibly the champions, and which the people have committed to their hands. These things are said not only about Mr. LaRiviere, to whose special connections in politics it seems that suspicion

attaches, but about the head of the Government himself. I know Mr. Norquay only as a pleasant and genial acquaintance. I hear of him as a man beloved for his social and domestic qualities. It will hardly be alleged, I presume, that he is capable of taking a direct bribe, but I can conceive no other motive that he can have for betraying the cause of his province. He must know that if he does betray it, and if his treason comes to light, he is not only dishonored, but lost. There is nothing to which he can look but the favor and confidence of his province. Possibility of return to the favor and service of Sir John Macdonald for him there is none. Let suspicion sleep till real reason for it appears. Let faction be banished also, or at least let its voice be silenced for one hour. It is too manifest to the eye of an onlooker, that beneath the union of parties imposed by the manifest exigency of the situation, and the over-whelming sentiment of the people, the fires of factious rivalry still glow; and that instead of heartily working together for the common object and against the common enemy, the parties are still regarding each other with unabated jealousy, each fearing that the other may have the credit of the victory, and are still trying to thwart and embarrass each other. If the result is the defeat of the Province, surely sensible and patriotic men will begin seriously to ask themselves what the claims of party to our blind allegiance are, and whether party government is the only or the best regimen for the State.

As I can never be a candidate for your suffrages, I may venture to speak plainly on another matter. If your cause is brought in any shape before the tribunal of British opinion, the weakest point in your case, and the strongest point in the case which will no doubt be presented on the other side with great ability by Sir Charles Tupper, will be the votes or the attitude of your representatives at Ottawa on the Disallowance

question. Four out of the five members for the Province, it will be triumphantly said, have either actually voted for Disallowance or shown by their attitude, at the time of the debate or since, that they are on the side of the Government. If it is replied that the Provincial Legislature is a unit, the rejoinder will be that the Provincial Legislature represents merely local interests, whereas the members of the Dominion Parliament represent Dominion and Provincial interests combined, while from the higher nature of the trust committed to them they are presumably your foremost men. Nor would it avail to plead in rebuttal anything that may be said about the means by which particular elections were carried, or against the characters of particular men, since British opinion would not go behind the returns. If an election for the Dominion were to be held now, everybody says you would set yourselves right by ejecting those who voted for Disallowance, or have surrendered to it in any way, from their seats. I am assured that at Winnipeg, if there were a vacancy, no Disallowance man would think of coming into the field. But this is the language which is regularly held when the elections are over or when they are distant. At such times the people vow that they will no more elect any but independent men thoroughly beyond the reach of government influence and serving the Province with integrity and singleness of heart. But when the election comes, the Government by the use of patronage and power is able to play the same game over again, and once more constituencies sell their birthright for some miserable mess of pottage. If electors cannot find it in their hearts on the next occasion to spurn the mess of pottage and keep their birthright, they will not only continue to suffer oppression but they will deserve it.

Not only am I not a candidate for a seat in Parliament but I have retired from journalism, so that I cannot be of much use politically to my friends. I

should never have entered journalism of my own accord, and I should have withdrawn long ago if it had not appeared that by my withdrawal the flag of Independent Journalism would be hauled down. Now I have the satisfaction of leaving it flying from the highest flag-staff in the Dominion. But if a time should ever come when it may be desirable, in your interest, to inform the public mind of England as to anything which may concern the people of Manitoba, or when a private pen can in any way help Manitoba to the attainment of her rights, mine will be as much at your service and will be as heartily employed as it would if its holder were the member for Lisgar.

